

Wiretaps In Crimes Resumed

Mitchell Plans New Division For Crackdown

By William Chapman
Washington Post Staff Writer

For the first time in three and a half years, the Government is using wiretaps in cases not involving the national security.

Attorney General John N. Mitchell, it was learned, has authorized an undisclosed number of taps against organized crime since taking office Jan. 20.

Under Mitchell, the Justice Department also is planning to reorganize the "strike force" approach to uncovering organized crime. It may establish a separate division in the Department for that purpose.

The wiretapping and new ideas on combatting organized crime were made known to the press yesterday under rigid ground rules prohibiting identification of the sources.

Not since June, 1965, when President Johnson issued a directive to investigatory agencies, has the Government been permitted to wiretap or eavesdrop on private conversations unless the national security was involved.

Congress last year authorized wiretapping and electronic eavesdropping in a variety of areas when it passed the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act. However, Ramsey Clark, then Attorney General, refused to use the authority despite considerable Congressional pressure to do so.

Although the number of wiretaps authorized by Mitchell was not known, it was said to be less than 40—the approximate number of national security wiretaps in place when the Johnson Administration

left office.

Some of the new taps, reporters were told, have the approval of one party to the conversations, a method once common in obtaining evidence on bribery. That type of wiretapping was still possible under the order laid down by Mr. Johnson in 1965.

It was learned that Mitchell has not used the most controversial feature of the new wiretapping legislation—an emergency provision permitting designated officials to wiretap or eavesdrop in national security or organized crime cases without obtaining warrants from judges. Mitchell was said to be formulating guidelines for use in these so-called "emergency intercepts."

See MITCHELL, A10, Col. 4

Anticrime Wiretapping Is Resumed

MITCHELL, From A1

All of the new wiretaps this year have been authorized by Mitchell personally and warrants have been obtained from judges, reporters were informed.

Mitchell is considering a number of plans for reorganizing the attack on organized crime, including changes in the "strike forces" established by Clark. Those forces have been composed of agents from several departments and assigned to cities where organized crime is believed serious.

Mitchell is considering establishing a separate organized crime division out of what is now a section in Justice's Criminal Division.

The Attorney General also is said to believe that the Department is understaffed and will need more manpower to carry out anticrime and civil rights laws. He is expected to seek an appropriation for fiscal year 1970 larger than that proposed by Mr. Johnson.

It was also learned that President Nixon has instructed the Internal Revenue Service to offer Justice full cooperation in the war on crime. Some officials at Justice believe the IRS has not been cooperative in the past.